

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and following remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8, 11-41, and 44-54 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 1, 2, 7, 11, 12, 14-16, 19, 23, 24, 30, 32-34, 39, 40, 44-46, 48-50, 53, and 54 are amended; Claims 9, 10, 42, and 43 are canceled; and no claims are added herewith. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 can be found at least in original Claims 9 and 10, for example. Support for the amendment to Claim 24 can be found at least in original Claims 9 and 10, for example. Support for the amendment to Claim 32 can be found at least in original Claims 42 and 43, for example. Support for the amendments to Claims 2, 7, 11, 12, 14-16, 19, 23, 30, 33, 34, 39, 40, 44-46, 48-50, 53, and 54 are self-evident. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claim 54 was objected to; Claims 1-9 and 11-22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,854,493 to Ichikawa (“Ichikawa ‘493”); Claim 23 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ichikawa ‘493 in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,727,607 to Ichikawa (“Ichikawa ‘607”); Claims 32-42, 44-52, and 54 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ichikawa ‘493 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,021,821 to Wegman; Claim 53 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ichikawa ‘493 in view of Wegman and in further view of Ichikawa ‘607; and Claims 10 and 43 were indicated as including allowable subject matter.

Applicant appreciates the Examiner indicating that Claims 10 and 43 include allowable subject matter. Accordingly, Claim 1 is amended to include the allowable features previously recited in Claim 10, as well as the features previously recited in Claim 9, from which Claim 10 depended. Claim 32 is amended to include the allowable features previously

recited in Claim 43, as well as the features previously recited in Claim 42, from which Claim 43 depended. Claim 11 is amended to depend upon amended Claim 1. Claim 44 is amended to depend upon amended Claim 32. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on Ichikawa ‘493, and the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) based on Ichikawa ‘493 in view of one or more of Ichikawa ‘607 and Wegman, is respectfully requested.

With respect to the objection to Claim 54, Claim 54 is amended to depend from independent Claim 1 and to clarify the features recited therein. Withdrawal of the objection to Claim 54 is respectfully requested.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that Claims 2-8, 11-23, and 54, which depend from independent Claim 1, and Claims 33-41 and 44-53, which depend from independent Claim 32, are in condition for allowance for at least the same reasons discussed above with respect to independent Claims 1 and 32, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Further, Applicant respectfully submits that previously withdrawn Claim 24 is amended to include all of the features recited in Claim 1, which should be allowable as Claim 1 is amended to include the features previously recited in Claims 9 and 10, as suggested by the Office Action. Accordingly, as Claim 24 includes the features deemed to be allowable by the Office Action, Applicant respectfully submits that Claim 24 and all claims depending therefrom are allowable for at least the same reasons as discussed above with respect to Claim 1. Therefore, Applicant requests that Claim 24 and all claims depending therefrom be rejoined and allowed.

Consequently, for the reasons discussed in detail above, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. Therefore, a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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